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LT. GOVERNOR NORTON ANNOUNCES STATEWIDE CERVICAL CANCER PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



As part of a statewide public awareness campaign, Lt. Governor Jane Norton will distribute eight thousand information packets to educate Coloradans on the nearly preventable nature of cervical cancer. As one of the first steps in launching this important effort, Lt. Governor Norton is preparing a display table at the Colorado State Fair where she will begin distribution of thousands of educational packets and beading kits regarding cervical cancer.

As the immediate past chair of the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA), Norton introduced and was instrumental in passing a resolution from the organization to launch this national public education campaign. Colorado is one of ten pilot states chosen to participate in this effort. "The NLGA is working to "End Cervical Cancer in our Lifetime," said Lt. Governor Norton. "The American Cancer Society shows the U.S. death rate from cervical cancer down over the past few years, but the rate of invasive cervical cancer is up."

In 2006, 9,710 American women are expected to develop cervical cancer and about 3,700 will die from it, says the American Cancer Society. "Given these facts and the fact that cervical cancer is almost preventable, I felt it was important to be part of this campaign," said Norton, the former head of the Colorado Department of Public Health.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a virus called human papillomavirus (HPV) causes 99.7% of all cervical cancer cases. Most sexually active adults

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will be infected with HPV at some point in their life. There are many types of HPV spread by skin-to-skin contact in the genital area. HPV causes no symptoms and usually goes away on its own. However, high-risk HPV, which stays in the body a period of years, can cause cervical cancer. The HPV causes cells to change leading to cancer. Cervical cancer can be prevented or cured by removing the abnormal cells before they become cancerous. A Pap test can detect the abnormal cells. Often, there are no early symptoms so women should have pap tests done regularly, says the National Women's Health Resource Center.

“By helping people make the connection between the virus and the cancer, there is a real opportunity to end cervical cancer,” said Norton.

In addition to the state fair booth, located in the Natural Resources Building, Norton recently distributed information packets to the Denver School of Nursing, to participants in the annual Run for Hope, and will provide packets to both the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Indian Wellness Centers. Norton is working with state and public officials to distribute the educational brochures and bead kits directly to community members, health care professionals, and women's groups across Colorado. In addition, she is asking press outlets to run stories on the preventable nature of cervical cancer.

More information on cervical cancer and this public awareness campaign is available at www.nlga.us.

PRESS AVAILABILITIES:

The Lt. Governor has an optional editorial available for use.

The Lt. Governor is available to do television and radio interviews.

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